Bayonne Bridge Navigational Clearance Program
PROJECT SUMMARY AND FACT SHEET

Introduction

A Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to evaluate potential impacts of the proposed Bayonne Bridge Navigational Clearance Program (BBNCP). A Notice of Availability (NOA) was published in the Federal Register on January 4, 2013 announcing the availability of the Draft EA for public review. A revised NOA was published in the Federal Register on January 25, 2013 to extend the public comment period and announce an additional public meeting (see further details at the end of this document). A summary of the Draft EA and its analyses is provided below. Instructions for accessing the full Draft EA are found at the end of this document.

Purpose and Need

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) proposes to reconstruct the roadway of the Bayonne Bridge to increase its vertical navigational clearance, improve substandard traffic and design features, and improve seismic stability. The project would bring the bridge into conformance with modern highway and structural design standards and preserve the long-term economic efficiency and sustainability of the Port of New York and New Jersey. An Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to evaluate potential impacts of the project. As this project involves a bridge over a navigable water of the United States, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) is serving as the federal lead agency for NEPA review.

The Bayonne Bridge connects Staten Island, New York and Bayonne, New Jersey spanning the Kill Van Kull, a busy shipping access channel for the Port of New York and New Jersey. It was constructed in 1931 and pre-dates many modern traffic and design standards. The project would upgrade the bridge roadway to modern standards, sustaining an important component of the region's transportation infrastructure, consistent with PANYNJ's charge to maintain interstate transportation facilities in the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area. In addition, as there has been a trend for shippers to use larger, more efficient vessels, (a trend expected to continue with the opening of the expanded Panama Canal) the project would increase the vertical navigational clearance of the bridge to adapt to these changes in the shipping industry and ensure the long-term vitality and efficiency of the Port of New York and New Jersey. The project would yield an estimated long-term National Economic Development (NED) benefit of more than $3 billion and up to $169 million in average NED annual net benefits.

Project Alternatives

The Draft EA considers two project alternatives: the No Build Alternative and the Raise the Roadway Alternative, discussed further below. Previous studies prepared in connection with the project concluded that other alternatives are not prudent because of their construction risks, environmental impacts, and costs as compared to the proposed project. Alternatives that were considered but discarded included alternative methods for raising the Bayonne Bridge roadway, accommodating larger vessels, and replacing the bridge with a new bridge, a tunnel, or ferry services.

No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative would involve the continued operation of the existing bridge with a navigational clearance of 151 feet above mean high water (MHW). The No Build Alternative serves as the baseline condition against which the potential benefits and impacts of the Raise the Roadway Alternative are evaluated.

Raise the Roadway

The Raise the Roadway Alternative would involve reconstruction of the Bayonne Bridge roadway within its existing arch support structure and include the following elements:

> **An increase to 215 feet of vertical clearance above Mean High Water.**

Today Future

> The existing channel width of 800 feet through the Kill van Kull would be maintained.

> The width of the bridge's main span roadway would be increased from approximately 40 to 70 feet. The deck would consist of four, 12-foot wide travel lanes (two lanes in each direction), a 6'-8" median with a barrier, 4'-9" outside shoulders, and a safety barrier on the outside of the roadway.

> A 12-foot-wide, shared-use (pedestrian and bicycle) path would be provided along the east side of the structure along the outside of the arch. The total width of the bridge deck, including a shared-use path and the arch structure, would be approximately 99 feet. The shared-use path would be continuous along the bridge at a length of approximately 7,000 feet. Ramps would provide access at both ends of the path, replacing the stairs currently used to access the pedestrian walkway in Bayonne.

- The project would increase the grade of the approach spans to a 4.85 percent slope in New Jersey and a 5.0 percent slope in New York, to meet the higher roadway deck of the bridge over the Kill van Kull. The approach roadways would be widened from 50 feet to 90 feet to allow for the upgrade to current roadway design standards. Acceleration and deceleration lanes would be located at the landings in Bayonne and Staten Island thereby creating a total maximum width of approximately 115 feet.

- The existing approach roadway piers would be demolished and new ones constructed to support the new approach roadway at the higher elevation.

- The bridge's design would not preclude future transit service on the bridge.

Environmental Review

Overall, the Draft EA findings show that the project would not result in any significant adverse effects, with the exception of an adverse effect on the historic Bayonne Bridge, which is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NR). The environmental summary includes:

LAND USE AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS - Land uses would largely remain unaffected, except for removal of several encroachments and utilization of PANYNJ property (see discussion below). No permanent property acquisition is required for this project.

NATURAL RESOURCES - A stormwater treatment system would be implemented, an improvement over existing conditions, thereby providing a benefit to water quality. No in-water work would be required, with the exception of a stormwater outfall in the Kill Van Kull from the New Jersey shoreline. The outfall pipe would extend through a federal jurisdictional wetland, resulting in minor wetlands disturbance. A 1.93-acre federal jurisdictional wetland in a potential constructing staging area may be affected during construction (see "Construction Effects" below).

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS - Several encroachments on PANYNJ property would be removed, but overall economic conditions in the project area would not be adversely affected. Select aerial easements over New York City streets would be expanded due to the widened roadway.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES - An adverse effect to the NR-eligible Bayonne Bridge would result from removal and replacement of historic features of the bridge. Mitigation would be developed through consultation with the New York and New Jersey State Historic Preservation Offices and designated consulting parties, and be executed through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

PARKLANDS AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES - In Bayonne, Al Slootsky Playground and two baseball fields—both located on PANYNJ property—would be displaced. PANYNJ is working with the City of Bayonne regarding these displacements.

VISUAL AND AESTHETIC RESOURCES - The visual appearance of the bridge would change due to the increased elevation of the roadway and approaches, but would not result in adverse visual impacts. The existing Bayonne Bridge arch would remain and be preserved.

TRANSPORTATION - Two travel lanes in each direction would be maintained but traffic features would be upgraded on the bridge roadway with 12-foot-wide travel lanes, outside shoulders, and a 6-foot, 8-inch median, improving roadway safety. An improved, widened, 12-foot shared-use pedestrian and bike path would also be provided, enhancing pedestrian safety. The current MTA S89 bus route over the bridge would not be affected, and the bridge's design would not preclude future transit service on the bridge. The project would increase the vertical clearance of the navigable channel, permitting larger but fewer overall ship movements underneath the Bayonne Bridge. The project would not result in adverse impacts on marine transport, and the fewer number of vessels operating through the Kill Van Kull would have a beneficial impact.

AIR QUALITY - No significant change in air quality due to mobile sources (i.e., traffic) would be expected. Two emergency generators (one on each side of the bridge) would be installed within a new building at the bridge abutments to supply backup power for essential systems (such as fire standpipes, roadway lights, cameras, and tolling equipment) in the event of a power outage. Potential air quality impacts from the emergency generators would be insignificant. Since the project would result in reduced emissions from ships in the harbor, the project would result in a regional benefit in air quality.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMMISSIONS - The project is expected to result in a net reduction in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions due to the increased efficiency of larger ships. Overall, the project would not result in adverse impacts on energy or climate change.

NOISE - The changes in elevation and alignment of the bridge roadway would result in increases in Leq(1) noise levels of 0 to approximately 1.5 dBA. Consequently, noise levels in the future with the project would be similar to noise levels in the future without the project. Comparing Leq(1) noise levels with and without the project, the change in noise levels at any receptor location would be expected to be less than 2 dBA, an imperceptible change. Changes of this magnitude would not result in any significant impacts.

HAZARDOUS AND CONTAMINATED MATERIALS - With adherence to applicable laws and regulations, there would be no impacts on hazardous and contaminated materials. Following project construction, no significant potential for exposure to subsurface contamination would occur.

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CONSTRUCTION EFFECTS:

- Construction is expected to extend approximately 45 months. The bridge would remain open to the extent possible, though the roadway would be reduced to one lane in each direction for much of the construction period. Overnight bridge closures would occur to allow work to take place over the roadway, and an estimated eight (8) full weekend closures would occur annually. Ample notification and signage would be provided to alert motorists. Some temporary closures of local streets and ramps would occur. Emergency vehicle access would be maintained at all times on the bridge.

- No in-water work would be required, with the exception of a stormwater outfall in the Kill Van Kull from the New Jersey shoreline. A 1.93-acre federal jurisdictional wetland may be disturbed in a potential construction staging area. Construction activities would comply with all applicable permits and regulations. The project would also comply with any approved Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and Erosion and Sediment Control (ESC) Plan to avoid erosion and water quality impacts.

- Any tree removal or habitat disturbance would be conducted pursuant to all applicable regulations and requirements.

- A Construction Protection Plan would be prepared to avoid adverse effects to any historic resources in the project area.

- Contractors would be subject to equipment requirements to minimize emissions.

- Noise controls would be implemented to the extent practicable to minimize potential impacts during construction. Noise would be monitored during construction to ensure compliance and a communication system would be established to allow the public to share concerns.

- A Construction Health and Safety Plan (CHASP) would be implemented to ensure proper handling and disposal of any potential hazardous or contaminated materials.

COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT - The project is located in a regulated coastal area and was found to be consistent with all applicable New York City, New York State, and New Jersey coastal zone policies.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE - Executive Order 12898 requires each federal agency to make environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing any disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects of its programs, policies, or activities on minority or low-income populations. Minority and low-income populations near the project area were identified using data gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau's Census 2010 and 2006-2010 American Community Survey. As discussed in the Draft EA, the project would not result in any significant adverse impacts other than a long-term impact on the historic Bayonne Bridge, which would be addressed in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act that would include measures to minimize harm. Potential impacts associated with changes to the bridge would not be disproportionately borne by the low-income and minority populations living near the bridge. While some localized adverse effects would occur in the study area during the construction phase of the project, these effects would be temporary and would end once construction is complete. Construction traffic effects are limited in area and duration and would not disproportionately affect neighborhood character or businesses. Air emissions would comply with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) of the Clean Air Act, which sets standards to protect the most sensitive populations, and thus would not be adverse. The project is not expected to result in adverse noise impacts and a number of measures would be implemented to reduce potential noise impacts and allow for the public to communicate any concerns. Further, any hazardous materials would be properly managed. Therefore, the project would not result in any disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations. The USCG has and will continue to meet with minority and low-income populations to address their concerns.

INDIRECT AND CUMULATIVE EFFECTS - The project was not found to result in any indirect or cumulative effects. An Induced Demand Analysis was prepared to look at the potential for the project to induce growth at the Port of New York and New Jersey by indirectly resulting in cost savings to shippers by accommodating larger more efficient vessels. The analysis found that any potential induced growth would result in about five additional truck trips per hour (or one to two truck trips from each Port terminal west of the Bayonne Bridge), having negligible effects on traffic, air quality, and noise.

Community Outreach

A comprehensive public outreach plan will be developed, keeping the community involved throughout the duration of the project. Public meetings on the Draft EA will be held on February 5,7 and 13 2013 (see below). In addition, the USCG will be continuing to conduct meetings with Environmental Justice communities to assess and address their concerns. The PANYNJ is also maintaining a project website (www.panynj.gov/bayonnebridge), and will staff community information offices during construction.

Additionally, there is a project mailing list comprised of local stakeholders, and media outreach will be conducted on an as-needed basis.

The public may provide written comments on the Draft EA through March 5, 2013 or provide oral comments at any of three public meetings scheduled for:

- **February 5, 2013:** 4-6 PM and 7-9 PM, Bayonne High School, Auditorium, 669 Avenue A, Bayonne, NJ 07002
- **February 7, 2013**: 4-6 PM and 7-9 PM, Snug Harbor, Great Hall, 1000 Richmond Terrace, Staten Island, NY 10301
- **February 13, 2013:** 4-6 PM and 7-9 PM, LeRoy Smith Public Safety Building, 60 Nelson Place, 14th Floor Conference Room, Newark, NJ 07102[1]

For further instructions on submitting comments on the Draft EA, see the Notice of Availability at http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-01-04/pdf/2012-31650.pdf or at the repositories listed below. All comments received during the public comment period will be reviewed and considered.

To review the full Draft EA, please visit http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=USCG-2012-1091 or any of the repositories listed below:

Lead Agency Office

- U.S. Coast Guard, One South Street, New York, NY 10004

Staten Island

- Port Richmond Library, 75 Bennett Street, Staten Island, New York, 10302
- Staten Island Community Board 1, 1 Edgewater Plaza, Room 217, Staten Island, NY 10305
- New York Assembly District 61, 853 Forest Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10301
- Staten Island Borough Hall, 10 Richmond Terrace, Room 100, Staten Island, NY 10301
- New York City Council District 49, 130 Stuyvesant Place, Staten Island, NY 10301
- U.S. Coast Guard Sector New York, 212 Coast Guard Drive, Staten Island, NY 10305

Bayonne

- Bayonne Library, 697 Avenue C, Bayonne, NJ 07002
- Bayonne City Hall, 630 Avenue C, Bayonne, NJ 07002
- New Jersey Legislative District 31, 447 Broadway, Bayonne, NJ 07002

Other

- Ironbound Community Corporation, 317 Elm Street, Newark, NJ 07105

[1] As stated in the Notice of Availability, any requests for an oral or sign language interpreter at the public meetings must be submitted to USCG by contacting Christopher Bisignano at (212) 668-7165 or Christopher.J.Bisignano@uscg.mil and must be received by January 25, 2013 for the February 5 and 7, 2013 meetings and by February 1, 2013 for the February 13, 2013 meeting.